

Diversion with services (vs. traditional juvenile court processing)

Benefit-cost estimates updated December 2015. Literature review updated July 2015.

Current estimates replace old estimates. Numbers will change over time as a result of model inputs and monetization methods.

The WSIPP benefit-cost analysis examines, on an apples-to-apples basis, the monetary value of programs or policies to determine whether the benefits from the program exceed its costs. WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies has three main steps. First, we determine "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using a statistical technique called meta-analysis. Second, we calculate whether the benefits of a program exceed its costs. Third, we estimate the risk of investing in a program by testing the sensitivity of our results. For more detail on our methods, see our [technical documentation](#).

Program Description: Diversion is an alternative to formal sanctions or processing in the juvenile justice system. A primary goal of diversion is to alleviate the negative consequences associated with the juvenile justice system such as stigmatizing youth as deviant or providing youth opportunities to learn deviant behavior through further exposure to more serious offenders. By diverting youth out of the juvenile justice system, youth can maintain attachment to pro-social norms in their communities. Diversion programs included in this meta-analysis vary in structure and processing as well as the type of youth who are diverted. While some programs divert youth at the initial stages of the juvenile justice system (e.g., law enforcement), others divert youth once they reach the juvenile courts. This meta-analysis includes diversion programs coupled with treatment compared to youth who were processed traditionally through the juvenile courts.

We used multiple regression to explore whether some program characteristics--such as diversion at the police level (as opposed to the juvenile court level) or diversion coupled with treatment--were more effective at reducing recidivism. We found no statistically significant effects associated with these two program characteristics.

Benefit-Cost Summary

Program benefits		Summary statistics	
Participants	\$603	Benefit to cost ratio	n/a
Taxpayers	\$1,058	Benefits minus costs	\$4,659
Other (1)	\$1,625	Probability of a positive net present value	97 %
Other (2)	\$814		
Total	\$4,100		
Costs	\$560		
Benefits minus cost	\$4,659		

The estimates shown are present value, life cycle benefits and costs. All dollars are expressed in the base year chosen for this analysis (2014). The economic discount rates and other relevant parameters are described in our [technical documentation](#).

Detailed Monetary Benefit Estimates

Source of benefits	Benefits to				Total benefits
	Participants	Taxpayers	Other (1)	Other (2)	
From primary participant					
Crime	\$0	\$720	\$1,397	\$358	\$2,474
Labor market earnings (hs grad)	\$623	\$266	\$308	\$141	\$1,337
Health care (educational attainment)	(\$20)	\$73	(\$80)	\$36	\$9
Adjustment for deadweight cost of program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$279	\$279
Totals	\$603	\$1,058	\$1,625	\$814	\$4,100

We created the two “other” categories to report results that do not fit neatly in the “participant” or “taxpayer” perspectives. In the “Other (1)” category we include the benefits of reductions in crime victimization, the economic spillover benefits of improvement in human capital outcomes, and the benefits from private or employer-paid health insurance. In the “Other (2)” category we include estimates of the net changes in the value of a statistical life and net changes in the deadweight costs of taxation.

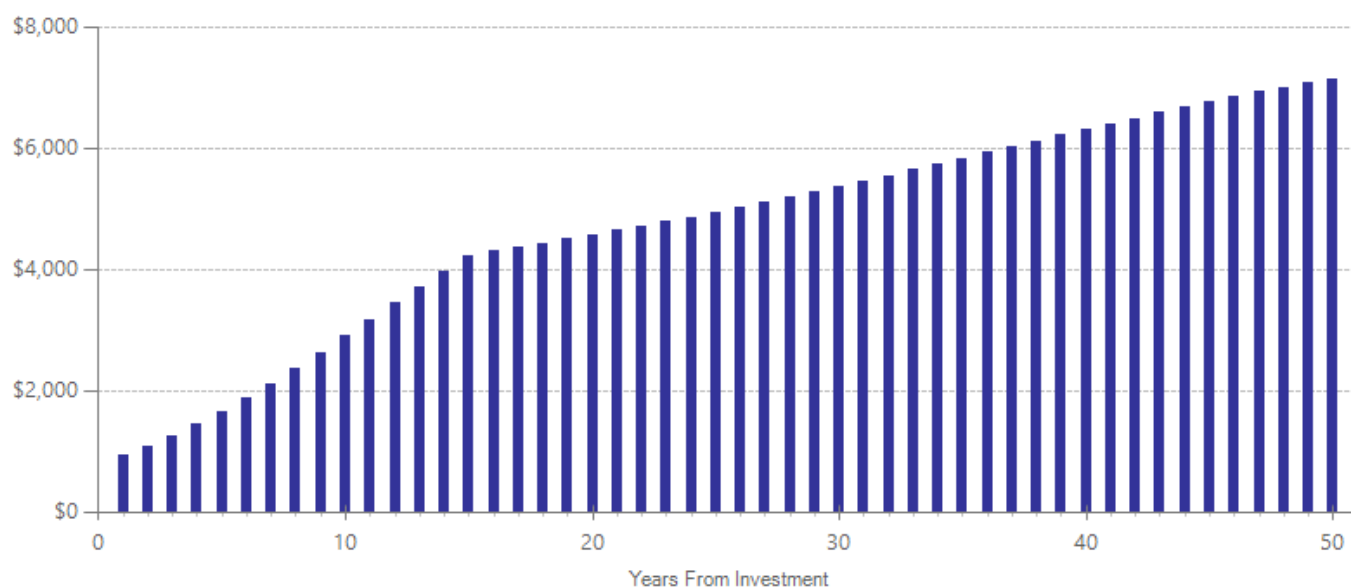
Detailed Cost Estimates

	Annual cost	Program duration	Year dollars	Summary statistics	
Program costs	\$853	1	2014	Present value of net program costs (in 2014 dollars)	\$560
Comparison costs	\$1,300	1	2008	Uncertainty (+ or - %)	10 %

The cost estimate for diverted youth was provided by the Thurston County Juvenile Court. The comparison group cost estimate assumes youth would have been on probation for 3 months and was derived using probation cost data from WSIPP’s benefit-cost model.

The figures shown are estimates of the costs to implement programs in Washington. The comparison group costs reflect either no treatment or treatment as usual, depending on how effect sizes were calculated in the meta analysis. The uncertainty range is used in Monte Carlo risk analysis, described in our [technical documentation](#).

Cumulative Net Cash Flows Over Time (Non-Discounted Dollars)



Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	Primary or secondary participant	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)		Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis					
						First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated		
				ES	p-value	ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age
Crime	Primary	18	5638	-0.079	0.007	-0.054	0.034	18	-0.054	0.034	28

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

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